

Strand Historic District
Galveston
Galveston County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3296

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HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. TX-3296

STRAND HISTORIC DISTRICT

Location

Bounded on the north by Avenue A, on the east by 20th Street, on the south by the alley between Avenues C and D, and the west by Passenger Depot, north to Avenue A and New Strand Street, Galveston, Galveston County, Texas.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The area known as The Strand was the principal commercial area in Galveston from the 1850s to the early 1900s. Located near the waterfront on Galveston Bay, the Strand District became the economic hub of Galveston by the early 1860s and built fortunes for businessmen such as John Henry Hutchings, J.J. Hendley, Henry Rosenberg and John Sealy. These prominent and prosperous figures exerted commercial and political control over Texas through ties with northern industrialists and state legislators, controlling transportation facilities, and monopolizing much of the trade in Texas.

Cotton and commission firms opened in the early 1850s establishing Galveston as an important seaport for southern Texas. The Civil War stemmed the rapid growth of mercantile firms in the Strand District, particularly between October 1862 and 1865 when Union troops occupied the city or blockaded its port. It has been noted that between 1861 and 1866, no commercial establishments were founded, no buildings built, and many prominent firms like the Hendley Company moved to Houston for the duration of the war.

Most of the early commercial firms that built their fortunes on the cotton industry before the war returned to Galveston and re-established their import-export trade with the northern industries while expanding their enterprises through increase in the selection of goods. As the second half of the century progressed, the commercial business diversified and enlarged their import-export businesses to serve all of Texas, New Mexico and the Indian Territories with dry-goods, household goods and light equipment. By the 1880s luxury items were also being provided through specialized merchant firms. The Kauffman and Runge Company began by importing coffee from Rio de Janeiro and eventually became one of Galveston's leading firms, importing Brazilian and Mexican coffee, European wines, liquors and mineral water.

By the end of the century, the District began to decline in importance as a trading center because of new transportation routes and the rise in importance of other cities. The storm of 1900 contributed to this decline when much of the city was destroyed due to the severity of the flooding.

INDIVIDUAL SITES:

The following is a list of those structures surveyed by the Historic American Buildings Survey within the Strand Historic District boundaries. Structures containing architectural and historical data are composed of cover sheets, photographs and data pages. Structures with little or no architectural or historical data have been placed in a general photo set. All field material listed in the index to photographs is found in the set of field records under the Strand Historic District, HABS No. TX-3296.

- TX-3296 A 2014 Mechanic Street (Commercial Building). Built circa 1885.
- TX-3296 B Wood-Rosenfield-House-Berlocher Buildings, 2213-2223 Strand.
- TX-3296 C John Berlocher Building, 2315 Mechanic Street. Built circa 1861.
- TX-3296 D Leon and H. Blum Building, 2310-2328 Mechanic Street.
- TX-3296 E First National Bank Building, 2127 Strand.
- TX-3296 F Thomas Jefferson League Building, 2301-2307 Strand.
- TX-3296 G Greenleve, Block and Company Building, 2310-2314 Strand.
- TX-3296 H Heidenheimer Building, 2127 Mechanic Street.
- TX-3296 I Hutchings, Sealy and Company Building, 2326-2328 Strand. Built 1895. Nicholas Clayton, architect. These two buildings were designed to appear as a single unit.
- TX-3296 J Kauffman and Runge Building, 222 22nd Street (Kempner Avenue).
- TX-3296 K Merchants Mutual Insurance Company Building, 2317-2319 Strand.
- TX-3296 L Palmetto House Hotel, 2303 Mechanic Street. Built in 1870, upper two floors added later.
- TX-3296 M Rosenberg Building, 2309-2311 Strand. Built 1870. P.M. Comegys, architect. This brick and iron front building once had a galvanized cornice.
- TX-3296 N Bolton Estate Building (J.F. Smith and Brothers Building), 2321-2323 Strand.
- TX-3296 O Ufford Building 303-309 23rd Street. Built in 1860-61.
- TX-3296 P Washington Hotel, 22nd Street (Kempner Avenue) and Avenue C (Mechanic Street).
- TX-3296 Q Moody Building, 2202-2206 Strand. Built in 1884. Designed by Nicholas J. Clayton. The building replaced a larger building which was destroyed by fire on January 13, 1882. Its fourth floor, roof and cornice were destroyed in the 1900 storm.
- TX-290 Hendley Building, 2000-2016 Strand. (See HABS No. TX-290).

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Galveston Survey was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation and the Galveston Historical Foundation, Inc., and developed under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical data was written by John C. Garner, Jr., acting as the Director of the Galveston Architecture Inventory. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Allen Stross in the summer of 1967.